



For Release:
June 25, 1999

Contact: Stephanie Babyak (202)401-2311
Jane Glickman (202)401-1307

NEW ED PROJECTS PROMOTE DISTANCE LEARNING FOR COLLEGE

U.S. Education Secretary Richard W. Riley today announced the selection of 15 postsecondary schools, systems and consortia that will have an opportunity under a new program to enhance access to federal student aid for their distance education students pursuing college level academic studies and training.

These selections are the first to be made under the Distance Education Demonstration Program, which was authorized last fall by the Higher Education Amendments of 1998. The 15 participants are comprised of 118 institutions located in 17 states.

“Distance education has great potential to broaden education opportunities universally, but especially for working parents, students who live in rural areas, and students with disabilities that may limit their access to the traditional campus setting,” Riley said. “Recent advances in technology and use of the Internet have resulted in a spectacular growth in distance education and present us with a twofold challenge: to ensure that students pursuing high quality distance learning programs have access to federal student aid, and at the same time, to ensure the integrity of the federal student aid programs. These projects will help us accomplish both goals by testing new ways of delivering federal aid to students involved in distance education programs.”

According to statistics for the fall of 1998, distance education courses were offered by 90 percent of all higher education institutions enrolling more than 10,000 students and 85 percent of schools with enrollments between 3,000 and 10,000 students.

Under the federal student aid programs (Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended), there are a number of statutory and regulatory provisions that limit the eligibility of

distance education students to receive financial assistance. The 15 participating schools, systems, and consortia will receive waivers from one or more of these requirements. In addition, some of the participants will be testing new models for delivering federal financial aid to their distance education students.

The Distance Education Demonstration Program will involve two waivers of legislative provisions authorized by the HEA:

- the statutory rule that makes ineligible for student aid those schools that enroll 50 percent or more of their students in distance education programs or offer 50 percent or more of their courses via distance education. This waiver will make it possible for virtual universities (those that offer all courses and programs at a distance) to gain eligibility and others to significantly expand their distance education programs;
- the statutory rule that requires that an academic year consist of a minimum of 30 weeks for students to receive the maximum federal financial aid. This waiver will permit qualified students who complete an equivalent amount of work in a shorter period of time to receive full aid for direct expenses. It will also simplify the administration of student aid for the participating schools that offer instruction which is not based in standard units of time such as semesters.

Waivers will also be granted for some Title IV regulations relating to the administration of student aid to facilitate arrangements such as:

- collaborations between two- and four-year institutions that will allow a student with an associate degree from a community college to complete a baccalaureate degree via distance education. A feature of several of these projects is that the community colleges will continue to provide student services during the period of baccalaureate study. This will allow students who find it difficult to pursue a baccalaureate degree on a campus to earn the degree at a distance, and still have local access to the student services that provide the support they may need to complete a degree;
- sharing of distance education courses among consortia members will allow schools to offer a wider range of courses to both distance education and on campus students than individual schools could offer on their own;
- enrollment tracking to verify status of students taking courses at several institutions simultaneously. Accurate enrollment information is essential for calculating a student's eligibility for aid; and

- calculating a student's cost of attendance by limiting costs to tuition, fees, and books and supplies -- excluding living expenses -- to help determine the appropriate amount of Title IV aid for distance education students.

These 15 demonstration projects will be carefully monitored by the department to test the quality and viability of expanded distance education programs while maintaining oversight against fraud and abuse. These projects are expected to continue for five years, and an additional 35 projects may be added for the third year of the program.

###

NOTE TO EDITORS: Following is the list of 15 schools and consortia selected in the Distance Education Demonstration Program. For a complete list of institutions within each consortium, call contacts at the Office of Public Affairs.

Distance Education Demonstration Program **Selected Applicants**

LDS Church Education System
Provo, Utah

Contact: Dr. Cheryl Brown, **e-mail:** Cheryl_Brown@byu.edu, **phone:** 801-378-4916.
(This consortium consists of four institutions in Hawaii, Utah and Idaho)

Capella University (formerly The Graduate School of America)
Minneapolis, MN

Contact: Paul F. Clifford, **e-mail:** clifford@minn.net, **phone:** 612-339-8650.

Colorado Community Colleges & Occupational Education System
Denver, CO

Contact: Carol Linsley, **e-mail:** Carol.linsley@cccs.ccoes.edu, **phone:** 303-595-1561.
(This consortium consists of 13 community colleges in Colorado)

Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium
New Britain, CT

Contact: Ed Klonoski, **e-mail:** eklonoski@mail.cosc.edu, **phone:** 860-832-3886.
(This consortium is comprised of 23 institutions in Connecticut)

Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL

Contact: Dr. Alan Mabe, **e-mail:** amabe@mailers.fsu.edu, **phone:** 850-644-3500.

Franklin University
Columbus, OH

Contact: Paul J. Otte, **e-mail:** otte@franklin.edu, **phone:** 614-341-6234.

Masters Institute
San Jose, CA

Contact: Linda Tyler, **e-mail:** Ltyler@mastersi.edu, **phone:** 408-346-2702.

New York University
New York, NY

Contact: Antonio Del Bono Jr., **e-mail:** antonio.delbono@nyu.edu, **phone:** 212-998-4483.

North Dakota University System
Grand Forks, ND

Contact: James M. Shaeffer, **e-mail:** jim_shaffer@mail.und.nodak.edu, **phone:** 701-777-3231.
(Consists of 11 institutions in North Dakota)

QUEST Education Corp.
Davenport, IA

Contact: Robin Throne, **e-mail:** rthrone@aicedu.com, **phone:** 319-355-3500.
(Includes Hamilton College and the American Institute of Commerce, both in Iowa)

Southern Christian University
Montgomery, AL

Contact: Anita Crosby, **e-mail:** AnitaCrosby@southernchristian.edu, **phone:** 800-351-4040 ext. 218

Southwest Consortium for the Advancement of Technology in Education
Lubbock, TX

Contact: Ken Woods, **e-mail:** kwoods@scate.net, **phone:** 915-235-7326.
(comprised of 14 schools in Texas and New Mexico)

University of Maryland University College
College Park, MD

Contact: Anne S. Perkins, **e-mail:** aperkins@umuc.edu, **phone:** 301-985-7953.

Washington State University (Pullman, WA) and
Washington Community and Technical College Online Consortium (Tacoma, WA)

Contacts: Wayne Sparks: **e-mail:** wsparks@wsu.edu **phone:** 509-335-1305

Kate Bligh, **e-mail:** kbligh@tcc.tacoma.ctc.edu, **phone:** 253-566-6006.

(consists of 44 colleges in Washington)

Western Governors University
Aurora, CO

Contact: Robert C. Albrecht, **e-mail:** balbrecht@wgu.edu, **phone:** 303-365-7558.